

**REMARKS**

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for reviewing the present patent application. Applicants appreciate that all rejections made under 35 USC §112 have been withdrawn. As to the restriction requirement, again, Applicants confirm the election of the process claims. Applicants believe that all claims of record may be considered by the Examiner without serious burden. Applicants will consider canceling claims 11-16 upon an indication that the remaining claims of Group I are in condition for allowance.

I. Rejection Under 35 USC §102(b)

The Examiner has maintained the rejection of claims 1-5 and 7-9 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Glacino, U.S. Patent No. 3,519,437 (hereinafter, '437); and Poiger et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,194,017 (hereinafter, '017); Heyland et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,879,130 (hereinafter, '130) and Ter Braak, U.S. Patent No. 5,962,061 (hereinafter, '061). In the rejection, the Examiner mentions, in summary, that the references mentioned anticipate the presently claimed invention.

Notwithstanding the Examiner's apparent position to the contrary, it is the Applicants' position, again, that the presently claimed invention is patentably distinguishable from the above-described for at least the following reasons.

As already made of record, the present invention, as set forth in independent claim 1, is directed to a process for preparing a flavoring mix whereby the process comprises heating from about 10 mg to about 10 g of a composition comprising a carbohydrate source and a nucleophilic species and at least 20% by weight water to a temperature of

100°C to 250°C and reducing the water content of the composition during heating to less than 5% by weight within one (1) minute after the heating has started whereby the process is carried out in a food vending machine.

The process of claim 1 is further defined by the dependent claims which claim, among other things, that the carbohydrate may comprise sugar, that the nucleophilic species can comprise biogenic amines, amino acids, sources of amino acids, hydrolyzed vegetable protein, yeast extracts, yeast hydrolysates, soy sauces or mixtures thereof. Still further, the independent claim is further defined such that the composition can comprise sugar and an amino acid or a source of sugar and a source of amino acid, and that the composition may be a homogeneous solution, and that the water content of the composition may be reduced to less than 5% by weight within 20 seconds after heating has started, and that the temperature range of the heating step can be from 100°C to 200°C, and that a buffer solution may be employed.

In contrast, and as already made of record, the '437 reference is merely directed to meat flavor compositions. In the '437 reference edible food compositions having two amino ethane sulphonic acid and thiamine are heated. Examples X and XI are directed to bouillon cubes and chicken flavored gravy, respectively. The '017 reference is directed to a process for the production of a flavoring product reminiscent of meat in taste is described. The process comprises diluting a yeast autolysate with at least the same quantity by weight of water. Subsequent to adding water, insoluble salts are precipitated by heating the diluted autolysate at a pH value in the range from about 7 to 8.5 wherein a residual solution is treated to have a dry matter content of 75 to 85%. The '130 reference is directed to a flavoring agent that is produced by subjecting a mixture of free amino acids, sugar and water to kneading and heat to produce a

mixture that is plasticized. The resulting plasticized mixture is propelled through an extrusion unit under pressure and heated for a time to react the mixture. The '061 reference, again, is merely directed to a process and apparatus for the production of confectionery mass. Components of milk proteins, sugar, glucose, fat and water are homogenized under controlled pressure and temperature and transferred to a scrap surface rotor cooker to produce the desired mass.

None of the references relied on by the Examiner, taken alone (or in any viable combination), even remotely teach, suggest or disclose the important and critical limitations set forth in the presently claimed invention, as amended. None of the references relied on by the Examiner describe heating a carbohydrate source and nucleophilic species and at least 20% by weight of water to a temperature of 100°C to 250°C followed by reducing the water content of the composition during heating to less than 5 wt. % within one (1) minute after the heating has started. Moreover, none of the references, in any viable combination, suggest that the process may take place in a food vending machine. Since all the important and critical limitations set forth in the presently claimed invention, as amended, are not found in a single prior art source or in the combination of references mentioned by the Examiner, the rejections made under 35 USC §102(b) and 35 USC §103 are improper and must be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully submit that all claims of record are now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action are earnestly solicited.

Applicants further submit this application is ready for appeal.

In the event the Examiner has any questions concerning the present patent application, she is kindly invited to contact the undersigned at her earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,



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